



# BREMERTON POLICE DEPARTMENT



## Chief Strachan's Weekly Update

As we finish up a tumultuous year, I wanted to offer a little context and perspective about what we are doing here in our community, and importantly to provide some positive news as we head into 2017. While the national media focuses on creating outrage and more division, more and more people are realizing that any positive change is going to be driven by us-locally. Here in Bremerton our community has consistently emphasized those things that bring us together, exemplified by Bishop Lawrence Robertson's comment following the deaths of Dallas Police officers, killed by a sniper while ensuring the safety of people protesting shootings by police. The Bishop said, "We want everyone, black and blue, to get home safe." Unlike the conversation nationally, here in our area we have been focused on sending the message that you don't get to attack officers, police are getting better training and implementing progressive policies, and we need to do a better job getting people with serious mental health problems off the streets. As we see the statistics, released just yesterday, that the number of officers killed by gunfire is up 56% over last year, I hope we can continue to work on civil and reasonable discussion, and continuous improvements, as we move forward.

Here are a few examples from the past week of bad human behavior and the very difficult situations that officers are called upon to solve. And as is almost always the case, we show up because there is no one else to call. Monday started with Officer Derek Ejde arresting a local man who had fled on foot from a stolen car. The car contained a large amount of property which was clearly stolen. Officer Ejde spent hours identifying, documenting and placing items into the evidence system (see photo below) and tracking down five separate owners. Officer Ejde also worked closely with Gig Harbor PD and the Kitsap County Sheriff's Office to get the property back to the rightful owners. You won't read about a case like this in the paper, but to the people involved it is very important. Great work, Derek!

January 4, 2017

### Contact



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Later in the week, Sgt. Aaron Elton and Officer Trevor Donnelly investigated a child abuse case involving the stepfather of a nine-year old child, who was first reported to us for suffering from a variety of ailments. The stepfather apparently utilized a bizarre punishment system involving a 20-sided die with each number corresponding to a specific punishment. The child was interviewed, and taken to the hospital for evaluation. He had significant bruising on his body, and detectives were notified as well as Child Protective Services and the Prosecutor's Office. The stepfather was later arrested and a confession was obtained. Awesome job by Officer Donnelly on this very difficult and time-consuming case, made even more poignant during the holiday season. Again, not a case that is newsworthy, but it is noteworthy and it means everything to the child, who is now in a safe place.

Our final example of the kind of calls we handle, but you will never hear about, occurred this week and started when a utility worker called us from an industrial park area in West Bremerton to report an elderly woman who was apparently lost. He said she could not follow directions and seemed confused. Officers spoke to the woman, and learned she had a difficult time remembering basic things; her address, her brother, sister, and niece's phone numbers, where she stayed last night, and more. She had expired driver's licenses from this state and from California. During the six hours that officers spent trying to help her, we learned she had been contacted by a deputy in another county on the 15th of the month after a hotel had called and said she was "confused". Bremerton officers began calling numbers on the woman's cell phone in hopes of finding a family member or someone to help. They finally found an "old friend" who reported talking to her a week ago, but they either wouldn't or couldn't help. We talked to a complete stranger who recalled meeting the woman and trying for three hours to direct her to a ferry from the east side of King County. That person said they were later contacted by another police agency who contacted her and she was lost again. Paperwork in the car showed she was staying in hotels and motels all over western Washington, and in California. She was finally taken to the hospital for an evaluation, and a few hours later she was released, because under our state law there was not enough to hold her. Our officers were just as frustrated as you may be reading about this incident, but our laws and our system do not provide the

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### PROFESSIONAL STAFF

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tools to involuntarily take people in this situation into protective custody. As with those suffering from untreated mental illness, our state needs to make changes to allow people in these circumstances to be picked up, and we need to provide a place for them to go.

Last Saturday, evidently upset about the Seahawks' loss, a disgruntled fan was unable to locate his vehicle upon returning from the game to Bremerton on the ferry. He was exceedingly intoxicated and after looking for his car, got into two other vehicles, telling the responding officer that he planned to drive those vehicles to "conduct a grid search" for his missing car. The man was arrested for drunk driving, which led to an interesting cell phone conversation with his mother, who had simultaneously called us to report him missing.

We had an interesting recovery of a stolen rifle last week. The rifle was originally stolen in 1971, and the officer who took the report was Sgt. Denny Plumb, whose son, Lt. Randy Plumb, is a current BPD Officer. [Click here](#) for a link to the story:

Finally, here is some good news for the new year. We keep talking about the difficulties and problems with mental health, and how chronic and untreated mental illness keeps intersecting with law enforcement. We have implemented Crisis Intervention Officer (CIO) training and now have an on-site mental health counselor who works directly with persons in need of services. We also have "Kitsap Connect", which focuses on the most frequent and chronic people who are having problems with mental health and/or drug dependency. All of this is funded by our county's MIDD Tax. Below are a few items from last week from our summary reports from the supervisors. This is something we would not have seen just a year or two ago - the names have been removed, of course:

- (Name Omitted A) was a chronic user of the system but, thanks to Sgt. Garrity and our mental health counselor, he now has a stable residence and a good paying job. He texted us today to say how grateful he was to have our support during the holidays.
- (Name Omitted B) is still at the Center where he is receiving treatment and doing great. He walks each day to the library. If you see him, stop and say hi, we need to build these relationships now in case he relapses. I spoke with him the other day and he remembers his actions and the actions of the officers when he was not doing so well. Plant the seed now so he remembers us in the future.
- (Name Omitted C) is still in jail and refusing treatment options at this time. We are working on options. May take some time.
- (Name Omitted D) is working with Kitsap Mental Health and is ready to try more treatment options. We are working with the KMH teams and hopefully he will have a place for him soon.

These are more examples of great teamwork to solve problems, improve the quality of life for people in our community, and officers just working diligently and compassionately to do the right thing. I don't have a viral video to show you, but this is the stuff that matters to peoples' lives. If I sometimes seem a little defensive about the work of police officers, it is because I truly honor and appreciate what they do.

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James Burchett  
Tom Wolfe  
**CHIEF**  
Steven Strachan

Finally, [click here](#) for a column published last week about policing and the current "post-truth" environment and how they are related.

Here's to a Happy and SAFE New Year!

***Work Hard - Have Fun - Stay Safe***

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